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SUBJECT: TFGG01: GEORGIA TASK FORCE SITUATION REPORT NO.26

RUSSIAN CONVOY DEPARTS; OSCE MONITORS TO ARRIVE  
AUGUST 21  
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1.(SBU) Two columns of Russian military vehicles left South Ossetia and crossed into Russia, media report Embassy Tbilisi reports up to 6,000 Russian troops may be near Zugdidi and Senaki. (TF/Embassy Tbilisi telcon, Reuters)

2.(SBU) Russia Deputy Chief of the General Staff Nogovitsyn told press Russia does not intend to return American military equipment taken in Georgia.  
(TF/EUR/RUS e-mail)

3. (SBU) Finnish FM Stubb plans to accompany two Finnish OSCE monitors arriving in Tbilisi August 21. OSCE hopes to have the full complement of 20 monitors from 12 countries, including the United States, in country by August 24. (TF/USOSCE e-mail)

RUSSIA READY TO RECOGNIZE CONFLICT ZONES; ASAD IN MOSCOW  
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4.(SBU) The Speaker of Russia's Federation Council said the Duma is ready to recognize the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. (TF/Embassy Moscow telcon)

5.(U) Syrian President Asad will use his August 20-21 visit to Russia to expand military ties with Moscow, media report. Asad said Russia's conflict with Georgia warranted increased military cooperation in light of Georgia's use of Israeli-supplied equipment. (Reuters)

ICRC TO ENTER SOUTH OSSETIA; CASUALTY FIGURES RELEASED  
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6.(SBU) FM Lavrov said Russia gave the International Committee of the Red Cross approval to enter South Ossetia. (TF/Embassy Tbilisi telcon)

7.(SBU) Georgian officials report 215 dead and 1,469 wounded. (TF/Embassy Tbilisi telcon)

RUSSIAN FORCES RELEASE AMCIT JOURNALIST  
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8.(SBU) The reporter was released unharmed following his 18-hour detention by Russian forces near Gori. Embassy Tbilisi is coordinating with a UNHCR convoy to transport the journalist to post. (TF/Embassy Tbilisi e-mail)

GRAHAM AND LIEBERMAN ARRIVE IN GEORGIA  
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9.(SBU) CODEL scheduled to meet with the Georgian president, PM, and speaker of parliament. They also will visit an internally displaced persons shelter and observe the arrival of a humanitarian flight (TF/Embassy Tbilisi telcon)

10. (U) Minimize considered.

RICE